Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

3987th Meeting
Friday, 19 March 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Qin Huasun	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 4 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/278)

99-85197 (E)

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The meeting was resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Jamaica, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Miss Durrant (Jamaica) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to express my pleasure at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council, and to congratulate you and your friendly country, China — a country with which the Sudan has long enjoyed close relations.

I am grateful to be able to participate in the debate on an issue of concern to a neighbouring country, a sister African State with which my country shares a long border along which tribes interact and where active trade takes place, thereby strengthening the common bonds between our two peoples. I am speaking about our sister State, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations, which defines the purposes and principles of the United Nations, states that the most important purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end it should take effective collective measures for the prevention and elimination of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

As I cite those principles, I recall the steps taken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo when it provided timely notice to the Security Council regarding the aggression of a neighbouring State about a year ago. The Democratic Republic of the Congo requested the Council to meet its obligations to maintain international peace and security by, first, condemning that aggression; secondly, demanding that the forces of aggression withdraw from the territories of the Congo; and, thirdly, requesting the forces of aggression to respect the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Unfortunately, the Council has remained idle since then. As the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo said on a previous occasion, all requests by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Council in this regard remain dead letters in the records of the Council. After a long silence, the Council reacted by issuing vague statements.

For our part, we should like to add that the position of the Council with regard to the dispute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is yet another testimony to the policy of double standards that has come to characterize the work of the Council and to the selectivity that has become an unmistakable feature of the Council's reaction to similar cases. Sometimes this Council deplores and condemns, and even proceeds to consider the application of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, while on other occasions, in response to similar cases, we find that it completely closes its eyes.

It has become clear that the title of the agenda item, "The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo", has been carefully selected. That title was chosen in order to avoid any disputes. However, the facts remain the facts. Aggression is aggression; that is an indisputable fact. Such aggression is a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; that is also a fact. The Security Council is thus expected to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities in order to maintain peace and security by putting an end to that aggression and ensuring the withdrawal of invading forces that have violated the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under thin pretexts and with excuses that are totally inadmissible under international law.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made enormous efforts to restore peace and security in the Great Lakes region, and those efforts deserve to be commended. I should like to provide several examples of such efforts. In May 1998, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized a conference in this regard, which was boycotted by the invaders. President Kabila also issued a declaration announcing that he would organize a national dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to

include the entire political spectrum, including the opposition and rebel forces.

In keeping with those endeavours, my delegation calls on the Security Council to make sincere efforts to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict that would ensure stability and restore the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, deter the invaders and curtail their territorial ambitions, as well as the ambitions of the great Powers, whose strategies those invaders are serving by proxy.

The delegation of the Sudan supports all regional initiatives aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the conflict in our sister country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the efforts undertaken by President Chiluba of Zambia in this regard in the context of the Southern African Development Community. We welcome the participation of the friends of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in these endeavours, which reflects their sincere desire to put and end to the conflict.

In expressing these sentiments, I am mindful of the fact that my country is directly affected by the events in the region. Such events are having an adverse impact on the southern borders of the Sudan, which was already experiencing instability, foreign intervention and sabotage.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the Security Council must fulfil its responsibilities and pay adequate attention to this matter, and should not turn its back on the events unfolding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It should treat the matter sincerely and seriously, not disregard it, as happens so often in cases involving complaints of African countries.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of the Sudan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I deeply appreciate the initiative of the Security Council to hold this open debate today, for all members of the international community are worried about the dispute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is especially meaningful that the Security Council is listening to the voices of the African States concerned. We commend the efforts of the Council and hope that other matters of similar significance will be taken up in an open debate in future.

Japan remains most concerned about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has been eight months since that country was drawn into the quicksand of war. Many deaths and casualties have reportedly occurred, and grave human rights violations have been reported in various parts of the region. Moreover, a large number of men, women and children have been forced to abandon their homes to live in poverty and in misery. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 58,000 Congolese have fled to Tanzania and another 6,000 to Zambia. There are also many internally displaced persons.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. However, the ongoing conflict is preventing the international community from effectively extending such assistance. We therefore call upon all parties involved to stop fighting immediately and vigorously seek ways to reach a ceasefire agreement. It is also imperative that they protect Congolese civilians and respect their basic human rights.

The conflict must be resolved through dialogue and negotiation, not through coercion. Durable peace can be obtained only by agreement through negotiations. The recurrence of conflicts is damaging to all concerned. For regional stability, it is also imperative for all States concerned to respect each other's political independence and refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs.

Japan appreciates the efforts of neighbouring countries, including those made by Zambia, which is playing an active role under the able leadership of President Chiluba, as well as those made by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We are, however, disheartened by the fact that this regional mediation process seems to be too slow in taking effect.

We want to call once again upon all parties involved, as well as on SADC and the OAU, to further intensify their efforts to bring this conflict to a peaceful resolution. It is also our sincere hope that the Security Council will continue to help improve the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The initiatives of the three African members of the Security Council on this issue are particularly commendable and welcome. Japan

is determined to work with other countries to provide continued support for the arduous efforts of African nations to restore peace to the region.

The importance of achieving an early ceasefire through dialogue cannot be overemphasized. But the dispute will not be fully resolved unless the Democratic Republic of the Congo is helped to get back on its feet. The international community must not focus solely on bringing the fighting to an end, but also on ensuring that post-conflict rehabilitation is successful in the context of both the reconstruction of the economy and reconciliation between peoples. Both goals must be pursued simultaneously in order to establish a solid foundation for peace and development.

We know that in African eyes, poverty is the most serious threat to human security and that the promotion of development is what many African countries want most. As African countries themselves recognize, efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts are essential for the stability and development of Africa. The OAU Peace Fund needs much support to this end, and the Japanese Government recently decided to contribute an additional $254,000 to that Fund.

Finally, I would like to stress that none of us here today can dissociate ourselves from the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or, for that matter, from the situation of the African continent as a whole. One problem I would like to point out is the fact that the parties involved in African disputes, which do not have the ability to produce weapons, nevertheless possess vast quantities of them. As a country that prohibits the export of any weapons, Japan requests all States to ask themselves whether their own actions might not be leading to the intensification of conflicts in Africa.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister in the Office of the President of Rwanda, His Excellency Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka, whom I welcome. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mazimhaka (Rwanda): The delegation of Rwanda is very pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council for the month of March. We are confident that your exceptional qualities as a seasoned diplomat and your acute sense of consensus-building surely constitute a significant contribution to our work.

We would also like to address our congratulations to the Permanent Representative of Canada, Mr. Robert Fowler, who presided with impressive diplomatic skills and professionalism over the work of the Council during the month of February.

Mr. President, we must thank you for organizing this meeting, even though it comes at a time when, as we all know, the African countries are already engaged in a series of discussions, which previous speakers have mentioned, on the subject of the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have held such meetings because of their concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Congo, which has an impact on the whole region, and also because of the concern we know the international community has for this problem.

We may sound more optimistic than previous speakers, but Rwanda believes that this process is well under way and that the Council should continue to support it as it has in the past in its resolutions and presidential statements.

We are also grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OAU, SADC and other African and international organizations for their continued support in the search for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In this context, I would like to recall the efforts of many leaders and their shuttle diplomacy — leaders of such countries as Zambia, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom and Libya — and many others who are closely associated with these efforts. I wish to recognize all members of the Council and congratulate them for their good work in this regard. The efforts of these leaders and organizations were undertaken with the support of this Council. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was himself fully involved in these efforts and he had the support of this Council.

The Rwanda delegation is of the view that this process has been helpful and it is only appropriate that, after this debate, the Council should reaffirm its support of the aforementioned regional processes, especially the

Lusaka process, in which the OAU and the United Nations continue to play a major role. We believe that the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be encouraged to have faith in the SADC fraternity of which it is a member.

The Lusaka process is anchored in the Pretoria declaration reaffirmed in Windhoek. The declaration envisaged the following aspects of the conflict and the resolutions to them: the need for a cessation of hostilities; a comprehensive round-table negotiation on political issues by Democratic Republic of the Congo parties, including a broad-based transition dispensation or Government; the resolution of security concerns of neighbouring countries, particularly Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.

On all these issues, palpable progress has been made. The OAU produced technical documents on a ceasefire agreement and its implementation mechanisms, both of which are under active discussion under the leadership of President Chiluba. President Kabila has announced on several occasions — and we have had occasion to hear that here today — that he is ready to initiate talks with Congolese parties. Maybe we can encourage the parties concerned to find acceptable mechanisms and facilitation to ensure that such crucial talks take place and bear fruit. This is a direct result of the shuttle diplomacy that leaders of our region have undertaken, and we believe that this represents a significant step forward, knowing where we started from.

Countries concerned about their security in relation to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have submitted their complaints to a subcommittee set up for the purpose. A comprehensive debate is awaiting the disposition of the Congolese entity, which is the only one that can discuss issues that relate to the sovereignty of the Congo and can give guarantees under international law to its neighbours. This will offer an occasion to test the commitment of all involved parties to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each other's countries.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has been in crisis for a long time. Rwanda, however, has been adversely and directly affected since 1994. The presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of large numbers of armed elements of Rwandan nationality, including former Government forces and militia who are responsible for the genocide of 1994, was to become a powder keg in our historically good relations.

Factors that cause insecurity to Rwanda may not be very clear for everyone to see, but they all relate to the unfortunate episode of our history in which over 1 million people perished. These factors are the presence of the forces I have just mentioned. Their ability to reorganize and rearm on the territory of the Congo and with the support of the Congolese Government is a factor that is destabilizing for Rwanda. We believe that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accepting this presence, violates its own sovereignty. The launching of genocidal attacks on Rwanda by these forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory, which have claimed thousands of lives in north-western Rwanda and which were also recently extended to the territory of Uganda, with the loss of innocent tourists' lives in the Bwini forest, is a reminder that this is a deliberate violation of Rwanda's sovereignty by the Congo.

Another disturbing factor is the apparent embracing of a genocide ideology by the Democratic Republic of the Congo leadership. This has been heard in public declarations, promoted in the media and followed by the execution of civilians before the eyes of the entire international community, as witnessed on the streets of Kinshasa. This is a glaring violation of international law that should be condemned by all of us.

Another phenomenon which has caused instability for Rwanda is the attempts to disown nationals of the Congo who happen to have a Rwandan culture. Their persecution and expulsion to Rwanda create a destabilized section of the Congolese population and impacts very negatively on the relationship between our two countries. In a way, this is a violation of the principle of the intangibility of colonial borders, because we assume that these borders contained populations when they were drawn.

The use of Democratic Republic of the Congo territory to channel arms and fascist ideologies to armed non-State actors in the region is a destabilizing factor for the region, not only for Rwanda. The Council was seized of this particular factor in a report of the Secretary-General in document S/1998/777 of 19 August 1998. In its paragraph 69, the report states:

> "The complications in the situation arising from the links between the ex-FAR and other armed groups in the region should be viewed in the light of resolution 1011 (1995) ... by which the Security Council prohibited the sale and supply of arms and related *matériel* to Rwanda or to persons in the

> States neighbouring Rwanda if such sale or supply was for the purpose of the use of such arms or *matériel* within Rwanda. Compelling reports [were recorded] of ex-FAR involvement in procuring weapons reportedly for use in Angola, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda",

not to mention Rwanda and Burundi, but we know that was also a fact.

In another report (S/1998/581), the Secretary-General said the events described in the report of the team, which was submitted on 29 June 1998, did not occur in a vacuum. The background to them was the terrible 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which cast an enormous shadow, which has not yet been lifted, over the whole Great Lakes region of Africa. This genocide led directly to the violence of the 1994-1996 period in the then eastern Zaire. This was publicly denounced by the Rwanda Government as a resumption in the neighbouring country of the 1994 genocide practices. That same violence resulted in the creation of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo, which successfully carried out a military campaign against the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko, which ended in Kinshasa in May 1997. The Council will recall that this resulted in the setting in the place of the Government led by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila.

It is clear that as in 1994-1996, the Democratic Republic of the Congo leadership, like the Zaire leadership before, embraced the evil forces of genocide, inevitably leading to the crisis of 1997-1999.

This is why Rwanda is persuaded that a comprehensive resolution of the crisis in Democratic Republic of the Congo should be reached, first, through a resolution of the crisis of governance and leadership in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; secondly, through the neutralization, dismantling and containment of the non-State armies operating on the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory; and, thirdly, through the condemnation and isolation of all those who embrace the ideology and acts of genocide in our region.

The concerns Rwanda has put before the Council in this statement stem from acts of aggression against Rwanda by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But Rwanda prefers to join the region and the international community in searching for lasting solutions to the problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. We think this is the only viable guarantee against the recurrence of the prevailing state of war, gross violation of human rights, genocide and the total disruption of historical ties among our peoples. Many of the previous speakers have referred to these threats.

Furthermore, let me reiterate, on behalf of my delegation and the Government of Rwanda, our commitment to respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries, especially as enshrined in the Charters of the United Nations and the OAU. Secondly, we call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to use its sovereign rights and put its act together in order to dismantle the dozen non-State armies which are being used in aggression against the territorial integrity of its neighbours.

Thirdly, we reaffirm our respect for human rights and humanitarian law and our resolve to join others in a coalition against the recurrence of genocide and terrorism in the Great Lakes region and elsewhere. The Entebbe principles which were agreed upon during President Clinton's visit to countries in the region would constitute the basis for this coalition.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the Minister in the Office of the President of Rwanda, for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Zambia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): First and foremost, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Security Council for allowing my delegation to participate in this debate on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the efficient manner in which you have continued to conduct the business of the Council. You have an abiding interest in African affairs, and it is thus fitting that this debate should be taking place under your leadership.

I hasten to pay tribute to Ambassador Robert Fowler, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, for the skilful manner in which he conducted Council business during the month of February.

Africa is a continent tormented by various conflicts, including the one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is the subject of our debate in the Council

today. The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has profound ramifications for peace and security, not only in the Great Lakes area, but for Africa as a whole. It is a conflict that has pitted not only the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the rebel elements within the country, but also some African countries against other African countries. If not resolved quickly, this conflict will mushroom and pose a grave danger to international peace and security.

Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one country, among others, with which my own country, Zambia, has a very long border. It is therefore to be expected that any developments in either country would have an immediate impact on the social, economic and security interests of the other. This has already been borne out by the considerable influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo into Zambia in the recent past.

The southern African leaders have been exploring the possibilities of bringing a halt to the conflict for some time now. In this respect, Zambia was honoured to be requested at the second Victoria Falls summit of the regional heads of State, held in Zimbabwe, in September 1998, to spearhead a mediation effort in pursuit of the mandate by regional leaders. This is an indication of Africa's strong belief that only a negotiated settlement can guarantee lasting peace. In this regard, we thank the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, and we much appreciate the contributions of the senior officials of these organizations in the overall search for a peaceful solution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The mediation efforts so far expended have revealed that the matter at hand is as delicate as it is complex. Hence, the need to proceed with caution and patience so as to ensure that the solution that may be arrived at enjoys the support of all the parties concerned. The mediation effort is also expensive in terms of investment in time, energy and resources. This therefore calls for assistance from the international community to enrich the regional efforts.

As Chairman of the regional mediation effort on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Chiluba has been greatly inspired and encouraged by the support that his mediation efforts have enjoyed not only from the OAU, but from the United Nations, the Security Council, the European Union and, indeed, the international community at large.

In this connection, my delegation is happy to recall that the Security Council presidential statement issued on 11 December 1998 stated, *inter alia*,

> "The Security Council is prepared to consider, in the light of efforts towards peaceful resolution of the conflict, the active involvement of the United Nations, in coordination with OAU, including through concrete, sustainable and effective measures, to assist in the implementation of an effective ceasefire agreement and in an agreed process for a political settlement of the conflict." (*S/PRST/1998/36, sixth paragraph*)

There are those who misguidedly say "Leave Africa to Africans; let them solve their own problems." To such people we say Africa is not an island. It is part of the global village. Africa is part of greater humanity; the progress of that humanity is bound up with the progress or lack of it on the African continent.

Fortunately, the Charter of the United Nations does not discriminate between one conflict in one part of the world and another in another part of the world. All must be treated the same.

Indeed, the fact that the Security Council is involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is as it should be, because under the Charter the Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, which are currently being threatened by the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For now, it is essential that, given the limitations of the regional efforts, the Security Council should be able to augment those efforts in a tangible way. In this regard, my delegation wishes to urge the Security Council at the appropriate time to put in place the machinery needed for policing the ceasefire once it has been realized. Security Council involvement is an essential ingredient on the difficult road to the establishment of lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Zambia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting today to discuss international and regional efforts to resolve the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to look at what the Security Council, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other regional and international bodies can do to put an end to the suffering of these African people, who are our brothers.

As the Council considers the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the request of that country itself, we should note that this debate is not intended to offer a platform for invective or for placing blame on any particular party. On the contrary, what we are trying to do is to highlight possible concrete solutions so as to encourage the parties to contribute to stability and security for all. In this context, I should like to thank you, Sir, for convening this Security Council debate, thus showing the great importance that China attaches to the problems facing Africa.

Egypt is following very closely and with great concern the evolving situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This situation has a negative impact on peace and stability in the entire Great Lakes region.

The Security Council, the OAU and the parties concerned must increase their efforts to achieve a settlement as soon as possible, with a view to strengthening the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and governmental structures of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and leading to the withdrawal of foreign troops. There must be a national dialogue in which all parties are involved. President Kabila himself recently proposed this with a view to achieving national reconciliation and to restoring the stability and security of his country.

Egypt has followed the situation with great interest and has done its utmost to promote a ceasefire, so that there can be a peaceful settlement. We have also participated in all the peace initiatives at the regional and other levels within the context of the OAU and the Central Organ of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution; we also were involved in the initiative of President Chiluba of Zambia and in the initiatives of the Southern African Development Community — all with a view to arriving at a peaceful settlement. We also support the efforts of the eight States that met in Windhoek in January.

Egypt is also very interested in a pan-African summit meeting aimed at strengthening security in the Great Lakes region. To create the necessary climate for success, this meeting would be held under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU. Egyptian leaders will do all they can to follow the talks and their outcome.

In December 1998 there were talks on this matter in Cairo between Presidents Mubarak and Kabila. In late 1998 and early 1999 the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Amre Moussa and his Congolese counterpart also met with a view to strengthening regional and international efforts to avert a crisis.

The Egyptian delegation has read the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the Security Council concerning violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Egyptian delegation condemns the acts of violence committed against innocent civilians during the crisis, and we reaffirm the need to ensure respect for human rights and to bring to justice those responsible for these crimes. The Egyptian delegation also reaffirms the importance of the political commitment necessary to strengthen the protection of civilians.

Weapons, including small arms and light weapons, must not be allowed to circulate. The weakest and most vulnerable sectors of the population must be protected. This point was reaffirmed by the President of the Security Council in a statement to the press on 17 February 1999. The President said that it was necessary to put an end to all military activities and military training activities prejudicial to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and he called for a halt to all such activities.

I return now to one basic issue essential to a settlement of this crisis: the role of the Security Council in conflict resolution in Africa. We appreciate the Security Council's initiative calling on the Secretary-General to submit a report on the causes of conflict in Africa and on how to resolve them. We also welcome the decisions the Security Council took when it considered that report. However, the report and the resolutions do not reduce the part that the Security Council must play in resolving individual crises in Africa.

The Council has a role to play in resolving crises and protecting international peace and security. The Council must take the decisions needed in order to study the situation in Africa as a whole, as well as in particular subregions.

We are sorry to see the emergence of a trend in the Security Council not to take steps to halt crises in Africa. Decisions are taken simply to study them within the overall context of the situation in Africa or to look at them in the context of, for example, the Great Lakes region. It is sometimes decided that the Security Council does not need to play its part when regional efforts are under way to defuse a crisis. But regional efforts should merely complement the role of the Security Council, which is to maintain international peace and security. The Council cannot reverse the situation and decide that regional efforts are paramount — in this particular case, the efforts of the Organization of African Unity. It cannot be said that those regional mechanisms have priority. The role of the Security Council must not be reduced to one of simply endorsing resolutions adopted by regional bodies.

Crises in Africa are becoming increasingly complex: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Angola, the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, as well as in other regions. These conflicts have shown that steps taken by the Security Council have proved to be inadequate. It is now up to the Council to review the effectiveness of the measures it has taken. It must look at each crisis individually and seek to resolve the African problems overall so that peace and security can be restored throughout the African continent.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Uganda, Mr. Amama Mbabazi. I welcome the Minister and invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mbabazi (Uganda): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Uganda, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Security Council for this opportunity given to us to address the Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Uganda believes in, and is committed to, the peaceful and negotiated resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, as the Council heard from some of the speakers this morning, President Museveni has been one of the leaders behind most of the initiatives to find a diplomatic solution to the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. President Museveni initiated the very first meeting, which took place in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, on 7 and 8 August 1998. When he met his colleagues at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit in Swakopmund, Namibia, President Museveni requested President Mugabe to convene a meeting of heads of State of friends of the Congo to try to find a solution to the political tensions that were evident in the Congo at that time. Unfortunately, by the time the summit took place the political contradictions in the Congo had exploded into violence. When it became obvious that the Victoria Falls summit would not result in an immediate solution to the conflict in the Congo, President Museveni appealed to President Mandela to convene a wider meeting of the SADC region and other affected countries outside SADC, such as Uganda, to try to generate a way of managing the crisis that had already erupted. As the Council heard this morning from the representative of Namibia, it was once again President Museveni who initiated the Windhoek summit of January 1999, comprising the core countries that are militarily involved in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am giving these few examples to show the Ugandan commitment to a diplomatic and peaceful solution to this problem. Uganda firmly believes that the two main causes of this conflict can be resolved through negotiations. Uganda has neither territorial ambitions nor economic interests beyond the normal course of trade between two nations. Therefore, my delegation has essentially come here to seek the support of the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community as a whole towards the achievement of this objective.

As I listened to this morning's statements, however, it became apparent that I need to explain the events in greater detail that I had intended, in order to give a sense of balance with regard to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has two dimensions: an internal dimension and an external, or regional, dimension. The external or regional dimension began with the war that took place in Rwanda, which resulted in the 1994 genocide. After the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) took power, the *génocidaires* — those who were responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of Rwandan civilians — and the former Rwandan army and the *interahamwe* militia crossed into what was then Zaire with hundreds of thousands of refugees. As everyone knows, they then proceeded to

hold those refugees hostage inside Zaire. The Mobutu Government then helped these *génocidaires* to reorganize, retrain and rearm and gave them territorial support to recapture power in Rwanda. The Government of Uganda totally opposed this move and made its position very clear.

In preparation for the intended recapture of power by the *génocidaires* in Rwanda, however, President Mobutu forged an alliance with the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum, Sudan, not only to aid and abet the crime of genocide in Rwanda but also specifically to destabilize Uganda in the hope that Uganda would then not be in a position to support Rwanda against that aggression.

In fulfilment of that plan, attacks were launched against Uganda on two fronts: from Congolese territory — Zairian territory, as it was then known — Uganda was attacked in the north-west, near its border with the Sudan and Zaire and further south-west, closer to Rwanda, in the district of Kasese. At the same time as we were being attacked in Uganda, the reorganization and rearming of the *génocidaires* had reached an advanced stage. The Ugandan Government decided to act in self-defence by first recapturing the territory those criminals had captured, following them into Zairian territory in hot pursuit. It was that act of self-defence against the then-Zairian Government — an act of self-defence which had regional and international understanding and support — that resulted in the fall of President Mobutu and the rise to power of President Kabila.

It was hoped that since President Kabila clearly understood our security concerns and as he himself was a by-product of our act of self-defence, he would address those concerns once he assumed power. Unfortunately, that did not happen. At an early stage we appreciated the fact that President Kabila had inherited weak structures from the Mobutu regime. Indeed, President Kabila pleaded incapacity to handle the situation in his own country. That is why President Kabila invited the Ugandan Government to deploy the Ugandan People's Defence Forces inside the Congo to flush out the Allied Democratic Forces, a rebel group that had been infiltrated into Zaire by the Sudan, and that had attacked us in Kasese, an attack to which I referred earlier.

A protocol to that effect was signed between the two Governments on 24 April 1998. Uganda deployed two battalions of troops at the invitation of the Kabila Government, and by specific written agreement between us and that Government, on 27 April 1998. In the meantime, because of the internal political contradictions, the rebellion broke out on 2 August 1998. President Kabila's reaction was to look for foreign military assistance. It was given by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, which decided on a unilateral military intervention instead of waiting for a regional, concerted approach, as originally proposed by President Museveni at the previous two summits. The intervention was made on the pretext that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been invaded by Uganda and Rwanda. I would like to inform this body that, as a matter of fact, Uganda at that time had only the two battalions that I mentioned earlier inside the Congo. While Uganda was primarily concerned about the activities of the Ugandan rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the intervention by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and, later on, Chad and the Sudan, introduced a new dimension to the conflict. To counter the perceived threat of the increased destabilization of Uganda, especially by the Sudan, using Congolese territory as they had done on many previous occasions, Uganda deployed additional forces.

I felt constrained to make that clarification in the light of some of the statements that were made this morning. As far as we are concerned, therefore, the external dimension in the Congolese conflict, both in the case of Uganda and — as I know — in the case of Rwanda, has been prompted by activities hostile to those countries emanating from the Congo. Uganda and Rwanda acted in self-defence.

There is also, of course, the internal dimension. I do not want to delve much into the internal politics of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A few examples will suffice to provide a picture of what happens there. The political base of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (AFDL) — the political alliance that President Kabila led — was narrow, because it was composed of four political groups which all emanated from eastern Congo. That is the alliance that assumed power in Kinshasa. When President Kabila assumed power, he failed — or neglected — to broaden his political base in any way. His alliance of four political parties remained the same; it was not broadened at all.

Subsequently, even the four-party alliance collapsed. And now, as I speak, only one of the original four constitutes the Alliance. Furthermore, President Kabila suppressed the established and active political opposition, as the whole world knows. Etienne Tshisekedi was condemned to internal exile and was not allowed — I believe that even today he is still not allowed — to travel

abroad. That provides an idea why, in reaction to that political situation, the political forces inside the Congo decided to rise up in rebellion. And that is precisely what happened in August 1998.

As I said earlier, my original intention had been to seek the Council's support for the regional efforts to find a peaceful solution because, contrary to the pervasive pessimism with regard to the prospects for reaching a negotiated settlement which I heard in this morning's statements, Uganda believes that a lot of progress has already been registered.

Allow me to provide some examples. In the various meetings that have taken place, it has been agreed by all the parties that there should be a ceasefire.

The following positions have been agreed in order to enhance the signing of this cease-fire agreement, whose principles we have already adopted at the regional level, in draft form.

First, all parties agree that there must be, as soon as possible, a cessation of all hostilities and a troop standstill in the Congo by all those who bear arms.

Secondly, it has been agreed that the security concerns of the neighbouring countries and, indeed, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself should be addressed. That these concerns exist and are legitimate has been recognized by the region. At the last ministerial meeting we held in Lusaka, a committee was established to work out a mechanism to resolve the question of the destabilization of neighbouring countries from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That committee has met, its officials have received various recommendations from the countries involved, and we are just waiting for a formal report arising out of that interaction.

Thirdly, it has been agreed that the rebels — the Rassemblement Congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) — must be involved in the peace process and must be signatories to the cease-fire agreement. This has been accepted by all the parties involved.

Fourthly, it has been agreed that a neutral, international peacekeeping force be deployed as an interposition force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that the United Nations should manage this process.

Fifthly, it has been agreed that all foreign forces in the Congo must withdraw in accordance with a time-table to be worked out by the United Nations and the OAU and under the supervision of the neutral interposition force.

Finally, consensus has emerged in the region that a national conference involving all Congolese political stakeholders should be convened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as soon as possible, with the assistance of the OAU, to determine the political future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Uganda Government has noted with appreciation the recent position taken by President Kabila to commit his Government to this principle, because, although we had agreed on this point right from the first summit, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had never accepted it. But I am happy to learn that President Kabila and his Government have at long last committed themselves to this principle of a national conference for the determination of the political future of the Congo by the Congolese themselves.

However, there are two sticking points on which full agreement has not been reached.

The first is the question of whether the involvement of the rebel RCD in the negotiations for the final cease-fire agreement should be by direct participation at the official and ministerial level or indirectly, through proximity talks.

The principle of involvement has been accepted. The debate now concerns the manner of involvement — whether it should be by proximity talks or by direct talks. Uganda's position is that it is better to have direct involvement on the part of the rebels, because it is only then that we can ensure their commitment to the terms of the agreement. No third party can claim to act on their behalf in the delicate give-and-take process required in such negotiations.

The second area where there has not been full agreement is on the question of whether the rebels should disarm upon the signing of a cease-fire agreement while the Government forces remain under arms. There has been a suggestion that upon the signature of the parties to the cease-fire agreement, the rebels should immediately disarm and give up the territory they hold today to the Kabila Government. Uganda's position on this is that neither of the two sides should disarm, except in

accordance with an agreed position on, among other things, army-building by the national conference.

In the meantime, both sides should be assembled in camps under the control of the neutral interposition force. They should register their personnel and arms, pending the completion of the process of forming an army that reflects the national character of the Congo.

One more point: these discussions have talked about genocide, and these again brought agreement on the issue. The Uganda Government, on the issue of genocide, would like to appeal to the Council and to the international community as a whole to stand firm against the perpetuation of the culture of impunity in the region. Measures to this effect must include the discouragement of safe havens for the *génocidaires*, and those who have committed heinous crimes against humanity must face justice.

As all present know, there is a constellation of these criminal elements in the Congo. They have been reorganized into fighting units, and indeed they form part and parcel of the alliance that supports President Kabila in the Congo. Recently — and I am amazed that I have not heard much about it, as only one speaker mentioned it — they managed to enter Uganda and abduct some tourists, whom they killed in the same way they killed millions of Rwandese in 1994, using machetes. This is a crime against humanity. It has been condemned by the international community, and we believe that it is the duty of the international community to discourage anyone from giving safe haven to such international outlaws.

In conclusion, I would like to register the appreciation of the Government of Uganda at the positive and constructive contributions made by the majority of speakers this morning, and I feel more encouraged that the support for the regional efforts will go a long way in overcoming the few remaining obstacles to peace.

What we ask of the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community is to give unqualified support to the region's diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. Uganda believes that this is possible, and, with more active support from the United Nations, we are very close to finding solutions to these problems which, we believe, are not entirely impracticable.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. As has been your custom whenever your country has presided over the Council, you have given ample evidence of your experience, competence and effectiveness.

I also wish to express our appreciation for your laudable initiative of concentrating, during your tenure of the presidency of the Council this month, on the discussion of African conflicts and on attempts to find solutions thereto. I cannot but thank you and all the members of the Security Council for affording my delegation the opportunity to speak on the conflict plaguing the sister African State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I also wish to convey our gratitude to the Council for convening this open meeting so that its deliberations may be known to all, not held behind closed doors. We would wish and request that all the Council's activities be as open as they were in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, before the international balance was disrupted earlier in this decade.

To Secretary-General Kofi Annan, we convey our greetings and appreciation for his strenuous and serious efforts, despite all the obstacles and difficulties he has encountered, in the service of the causes of peace and security in the world in general, and in Africa in particular.

My delegation feels that this debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is of special importance because it gives the opportunity to members of the Council, the States Members of the United Nations and the international community to play a decisive role in support of African efforts to find a settlement to the regrettable and painful conflict, that has long raged on that continent and to affirm the need to step up efforts to end it and to achieve national reconciliation with the participation of all parties. On this occasion, we cannot but applaud the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and especially those of the President of Zambia, to achieve a peaceful settlement of this conflict, which threatens stability, peace and security

in the region and has had terrible humanitarian consequences.

My country is convinced that the social, political and cultural problems that we Africans suffer are but the normal outcome of the factors and facts of history and geography. Politics are but one expression of such factors, since Africa's recent history is one of foreign occupation and domination and because Africa's political geography was invented by foreign occupiers and embodied in conventions that they concluded among themselves, defining the borders of States to conform with their own interests. Africa's regional and domestic conflicts are but the natural and inevitable results of these events. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, deeply cognizant of this, has devoted its full attention to this problem in order to achieve a fair, equitable and just solution that would restore political stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo based on consensus and social harmony. Such a solution must be achieved within the context of the OAU and free from any foreign influences, which seek only to impose hegemony in Africa, monopolize its wealth and markets in order to serve their interests for as long as possible, and to foment further regional and domestic problems.

In pursuit of this objective, brother Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, leader of the Revolution, has convened numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings in Libya. Many summits and conferences have been held for numerous African leaders in the Jamahiriya, enjoying the participation in particular of those African leaders of the States most directly concerned, in full coordination with the chairmanship of the OAU. One of these encounters was a mini-summit held in the city of Surt in late September, attended by the Presidents of Uganda, Chad, Niger and Eritrea, which issued a statement calling for the formation of African forces to replace foreign forces present in the Congolese territories and designating brother Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, in his capacity as Chairman of the group of Sahel and Saharan States, as coordinator of the peace process in the Great Lakes region.

As a result of these Libyan initiatives, brother Qadhafi, with the cooperation of the parties concerned, managed to overcome one of the largest obstacles to achieving a final solution by convening a direct meeting between the Congolese parties in Libya. This encounter was an essential turning point in the search for a solution to this problem. The most important achievement of the meeting was breaking the deadlock and opening a direct dialogue between the parties concerned. In pursuit of these efforts, the leader of the Libyan Revolution recently initiated intensive contacts with the current Chairman of the OAU and a number of other African Presidents in an attempt to call an emergency African summit to take up the problem of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other armed conflicts in Africa. Had this emergency summit met, it would have allowed this problem to be considered at the highest African level in an attempt to find effective solutions thereto. We are confident that the coming regular African summit, scheduled to be held in Algeria in July, will redouble the efforts to achieve this objective.

Several regional African meetings have been held in good faith, with the participation of all parties, in order to find a solution to this problem and to stop the bloodshed in the Great Lakes region. These meetings, however, although they demonstrated the readiness of all parties to halt the bloody conflict, did not achieve the necessary ceasefire.

My country's position and endeavours to find a peaceful solution to this conflict can be summarized as follows.

First, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be respected.

Second, all conflicts between African States must be solved through dialogue, negotiation, arbitration and the non-resort to force in the settlement of disputes.

Third, all African States must refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of other States.

Fourth, an African solution to this conflict is required in the context of the OAU so as to prevent foreign intervention in Africa's affairs.

Fifth, an African force must be established to serve as a peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to guarantee its borders, to prevent massacres among the inhabitants of the region, and to provide security guarantees to neighbouring States.

Sixth, a peace conference among all States concerned should be convened to conclude agreements on good-neighbourliness and friendship.

Seventh, the United Nations together with the OAU should play a major role in finding solutions to the humanitarian problem of refugees and displaced persons.

Eighth, the United Nations should lend its support to solutions agreed upon by the OAU by, *inter alia*, providing material support of all kinds.

African meetings should continue — at any time, in any place and at any level — to follow up on previous efforts and to continue the dialogue among the parties to the conflict. Liaison committees should be set up to work on ways to involve the parties concerned in the peace process with a view to agreeing on an immediate ceasefire and on a just and lasting solution to this conflict, which has been tearing the African continent apart. Such a solution must stop the deterioration of the humanitarian situation of the peoples of the region. We welcome President Kabila's declared readiness to engage in a national dialogue, with the participation of all concerned parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, aimed at achieving national reconciliation as a necessary step towards the restoration of comprehensive, lasting peace and security in the region.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Kenya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): Allow me first to congratulate you, Ambassador Qin Huasun, on the excellent manner in which you have been presiding over the work of the Security Council this month. Having worked with you in the Council, I am keenly aware of your dedication to African issues, which motivated you and the Council to organize this open meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Allow me also to congratulate your predecessor, my colleague Ambassador Fowler of Canada, on the commendable way in which he conducted the affairs of the Council for the month of February. I also have the honour to recognize the presence of the Minister for Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. She Okitundu.

Kenya remains gravely concerned at the situation that has continued to obtain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For many months now, the situation has remained in a stalemate despite concerted regional and bilateral diplomatic efforts. We are convinced that the international community needs to be more involved and needs to stop the conflict from escalating even further. The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the potential to engulf the eastern, central and southern subregions of Africa, with the attendant implications for the whole of the African region, and indeed beyond.

Aware of this fact, and at the invitation of my President, His Excellency Daniel arap Moi, the three leaders of the East African Cooperation group, comprising President Moi of Kenya, His Excellency President Mkapa of Tanzania and His Excellency President Museveni of Uganda, met last October in Nairobi to try and address the situation. It is worth noting that during the early stages of the renewed conflict, President Moi had, on many occasions during regional efforts to resolve the problems of the region, expressed the fear that the problems underlying the 1996-1997 crisis in the Great Lakes region had not been properly addressed; he feared that the crisis would recur. It is unfortunate to note that this has come to pass, and, as the leaders observed during their October meeting, the conflict has already adversely affected their countries. Some of these effects are an influx of refugees, the displacement of populations, political insecurity and a decline in economic activities.

The leaders underscored the urgent need for the international community comprehensively to address the situation obtaining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They offered the following points as a basis for facilitating a speedy resolution: first, the immediate cessation of hostilities; secondly, the immediate holding of negotiations leading to a ceasefire agreement and a troop withdrawal; thirdly, the adoption of measures to address the security concerns of neighbouring States; fourthly, initiation of an all-inclusive political dialogue including the protection of marginalized groups; and, finally, the deployment of a neutral international peacekeeping force under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. Those points are as valid today as they were in October of last year; it is in their realization that a lasting solution to the crisis lies.

Kenya firmly believes in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urgently call on all the parties involved in this painful conflict to re-commit themselves to a peaceful solution and to work unreservedly towards that goal. In this regard, we are greatly encouraged by African regional efforts dedicated to resolving this conflict, chaired by His Excellency President Chiluba of Zambia and involving President Chissano of Mozambique and

President Mkapa of Tanzania. From our information, we can see that this regional initiative has achieved some progress. This includes agreement in principle on: a ceasefire; withdrawal of forces; the establishment of a neutral force to monitor the agreement; and discussions among all Congolese parties. We now await substantive progress in negotiations on the modalities of implementation. We hope that the great effort already expended on this initiative will soon bear some fruit in the form of a lasting, peaceful solution. Kenya strongly supports this initiative and would encourage more concrete support from the international community.

As a complement to these regional efforts, Kenya would also like to see more active involvement by the international community, and in particular by the United Nations. In this context, we have always felt that this is another situation where the personal involvement of the Secretary-General could have borne some fruit. However, we are also sensitive to the ramifications of this kind of involvement and would welcome any proposals the Secretary-General might offer in that regard.

The Security Council cannot afford to abdicate its Charter-based primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, including in Africa. To leave the burden of enforcing a peace agreement on a purely regional force with no international component cannot, and indeed should not, be tested in a complex dispute such as the one prevailing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When Kenya was a member of the Security Council, we argued that a suitable concept of operations for a peacekeeping force should be designed. We believe that the time has come for this idea to be taken to its logical conclusion.

In this regard, we encourage a holistic approach in addressing the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such a holistic approach would, as we see it, simultaneously do two things. First, it would address the immediate political and security problems inherent in the conflict, and, secondly, it would incorporate a carefully calibrated incentive package which would anticipate a post-conflict peace-building period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is in that context that we view the French proposal for an international conference on peace, stability and socio-economic development in the Great Lakes region as a positive and constructive move.

Given this background, Kenya would be very interested to know how the Security Council intends to proceed in addressing the complexities of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Kenya for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Vermeulen (South Africa): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation thinks it is timely. We would also like to thank the Council for giving us the opportunity to address it on this matter.

The South African Government is extremely concerned at developments, not only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in the region. Should the conflict not end soon it might expand further to include larger sections of our continent. Although the present conflict started on 2 August 1998, it has its roots in many years of mismanagement and corruption in the former Zaire. The South African Government believes that the ousting of the former President, Mobutu Sese Seko, in May 1997, created an ideal opportunity to empower the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The discussions held on the South African naval vessel, *SAS Outeniqua*, which preceded President Mobutu's departure and also involved the current President of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Kabila, had as its purpose the establishment of a broad-based political order within a proper legal framework.

Unfortunately, this is history, and the region, as well as the continent, is faced with an extremely complicated conflict in an inhospitable environment. Since the outbreak of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the South African Government has taken a consistent and clear position, based on its belief that lasting peace can be ensured only through all-inclusive negotiations involving all parties to the conflict.

Our Government remains convinced that the outcome of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit, held in Pretoria on 23 August 1998, provides the framework for a negotiated solution to the conflict. The summit called for a ceasefire, a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of all foreign forces involved in the conflict, and negotiations

among all inhabitants of the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed at re-establishing a democratic government in the country.

Within this context, our Government has been fully supportive of the efforts of President Chiluba of Zambia, in accordance with the mandate given to him by the SADC summit held in Mauritius in September 1998, to bring about a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The South African Government has in fact been actively involved in the regional talks held in Lusaka, Gaborone and other cities, talks aimed at getting agreement among all parties to the conflict — including the rebel forces — on the terms of a ceasefire and the modalities of its implementation.

Our Government maintains the view that there is clearly both an internal and an external dimension to the conflict. In our opinion, all belligerents in the conflict should participate in the search for a ceasefire if a permanent end to the hostilities and lasting stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region are to be achieved.

Of immediate concern to our Government is the cessation of all hostilities and that a ceasefire document should be signed by all belligerents. The signing of a ceasefire should be followed by the establishment of an appropriate international monitoring mechanism under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations.

This ceasefire agreement should be followed by the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a predetermined procedure which should take into consideration the removal of military threats to the present Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as guaranteeing the security of neighbouring countries.

A further aspect which is of critical importance is that all belligerents should commit themselves to peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in the Central African region. With regard to stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the South African Government is of the opinion that all political groupings in that country should be able to participate in negotiations aimed at establishing a representative national government.

On the issue of regional security, we have taken note of calls by some countries for the convening of an international conference encompassing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and affected neighbours. Gaining international support for the reconstruction and development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be an important aspect of such a conference.

Our Government is also extremely concerned at the general deterioration in the respect for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the start of the conflict. This has revealed ethnic divisions which continue to prevent movement towards lasting national reconciliation. The lack of respect for human rights seems to be prevalent in most of the regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where conflict is taking place.

The South African Government condemns all human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we request all belligerents to adhere to international agreements and conventions with regard to a situation of conflict and to ensure general respect for human rights, especially those of the civilian population.

The South African Government looks forward to a speedy resolution of the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the only way in which the situation will stabilize and allow the citizens of that troubled land to enjoy the peace and stability they are all entitled to.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Muchetwa (Zimbabwe): My delegation welcomes this debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an agenda item of the Council.

Nearly 60 years ago Europe and the rest of the world were plunged into a cataclysmic war after one man, Adolf Hitler, misjudged peace-loving Europe's attitude of appeasement towards Germany, interpreting it as implying that he could invade and annex his neighbours' territories with impunity. It was only the unwavering resolve of the Allied Powers to resist this madness that finally led to the defeat of Hitlerism and that consigned it to the dustbin of history.

But today, by a twist of fate, a doctrine akin to fascism — but more pernicious — has reared its ugly head in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where two neighbours have decided to invade the Democratic Republic of the Congo, purportedly in search of security. The security thesis is an excuse for Uganda and Rwanda to dismember the polity of the Democratic Republic of Congo in an endeavour to establish a "Greater Rwanda". Does this not smack of Hitler's expansionist policies in search of *Lebensraum* — living space? Uganda and Rwanda want, by force, to tear away the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to create a State to be called "Ruwenzori". In blatant violation of the national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the invaders have been appointing "governors" and other officials, creating artificial borders within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by issuing and demanding visas and by smuggling commodities such as timber, gold and diamonds out of the Congo.

One of the local newspapers quoted one of the invading countries' leaders as saying:

> "What Hitler did to bring Germany together, we should also do it here. Hitler was a smart guy, but I think he went a bit too far by wanting to conquer the world".

Here is a leader of a country who, first, admires what Hitler did and, secondly, wants to replicate Hitler's strategy in our subregion.

The establishment of the United Nations after the Second World War was to ensure that expansionism that sought to violate territorial integrity would not be tolerated again, and for that reason territorial integrity was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as an inviolable principle. In like manner, the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) also embodied the principle of the territorial integrity of member States, as well as the sanctity of their colonial boundaries. Uganda and Rwanda, whose membership of both the United Nations and the OAU binds them to these cardinal principles of the United Nations Charter, have — to the chagrin of other United Nations Members — decided to violate international law, and it is therefore the bounden duty of the United Nations to condemn this wayward behaviour.

Zimbabwe — together with Angola, Namibia and Chad — responding to a distress call by the legitimate Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is now assisting that country to uphold its territorial integrity and national sovereignty. The intervention of the allied forces of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is upheld by the inherent right to individual or collective self-defense, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

I also want to take this opportunity to inform you that at the meeting held in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1995, the Inter-State Defense and Security Committee of the SADC approved collective action in the event of attempts to change the legitimate Governments of its member States by military means. Furthermore, at its Harare summit in 1997, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) avowed once and for all the change of legitimate Governments by military force was not to be tolerated.

As a matter of principle and practice, the SADC region does not and will not tolerate any extra-legal road map to the corridors of power.

Just last year, the Security Council itself deliberated a report (S/1998/318) submitted to it by the Secretary-General, the title of which was "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". Indeed, one of the causes of conflict in Africa is the lack of respect for other States' boundaries, as this case demonstrates. Zimbabwe calls on the Council to unequivocally oppose expansionism. To act otherwise would send wrong signals to invading States, similar to the policy of appeasement that emboldened Hitler to pursue his expansionist dream.

Reports from the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are occupied by the invading States, indicate that many Congolese have become internally displaced persons, while others are being massacred, and that natural resources are being pillaged by Uganda and Rwanda. Is it not surprising that Uganda has become a gold-exporting country, although it is well known that nature has not endowed it with that precious metal? Is the silence of the international community encouraging the invading States to think that their aggression is supported?

The allied forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have no ulterior motives at all. They are ready to pull out their forces when, first, a ceasefire has taken effect and the invading States have withdrawn their forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, secondly, a United Nations peacekeeping force has been

placed along the common borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the invading States.

The allied forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are sensitive to the security concerns of the invading States and strongly believe that these concerns can properly be addressed by mechanisms other than violating other States' boundaries. That expansionist philosophy will not address those security concerns.

Zimbabwe believes that all countries, big or small, weak or strong, have a right to have their boundaries respected. Any problems existing between States are better dealt with through mechanisms that are at the disposal of all nations, including those offered by the United Nations. In that regard, the OAU and SADC have worked to produce a basis for a ceasefire. We ask the international community not only to uphold that framework, but also to impress upon the invading States the need to give peace a chance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation therefore calls for the unconditional withdrawal of the invading forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and appeals to the Security Council and the international community to assist in the preservation of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo need to be left to themselves to establish full peace and democracy, and indeed to start the process of developing their country in a state of tranquillity.

One of the major causes of armed conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa is the refugee-generating politics of exclusion pursued by the invading States. My delegation submits that an international conference on peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes region should be convened at the appropriate time and under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU. Such a conference would involve all the Governments of the region and their respective parties to the conflict.

The preservation of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States lies at the very core of the mandate of maintaining international peace and security. For that reason, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have invested their hope in the Security Council.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes and appreciates the opportunity to address the Security Council under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure.

When the United Republic of Tanzania addressed the Security Council on the situation in Africa in April 1998, we made an appeal to the Council to follow what in large measure appeared to be positive developments from the continent with a message to reassure Africa that hope was not lost: a message to reaffirm that the United Nations will work not only with African countries but also with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in addressing the twin goals of peace and security on the one hand, and development on the other. Regrettably, the events that have since unfolded have not permitted the United Nations to bolster its focus in that regard.

As a result, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the hope and expectations ushered in by a new Government in Kinshasa remain unfulfilled, largely due to a host of intervening events. The outbreak of war in that country is therefore a setback to the initial optimism of the people not only of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the Great Lakes, but of Africa as well. It must be underscored that these developments have also had grave humanitarian consequences.

The immediate impact on the United Republic of Tanzania of the outbreak of hostilities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the sustained flow of refugees into our country. To us, this is a constant reminder of the human tragedy facing not only the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but our region, as well as the international community. Once again, this conflict has proved that, as always, it is the innocent civilians, and especially the most vulnerable among them — women and children — who bear the brunt of the attendant hostilities. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suffered so much over recent years. We owe them a contribution which would allow the cessation of hostilities and permit a solution to be found through dialogue, in full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council is fully aware of the regional mediation process begun by the Organization of African Unity and that of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has established a contact group, under the chairmanship of President Chiluba of the Republic of Zambia, that includes my President, Benjamin William

Mkapa. Several meetings have been held in Lusaka and elsewhere in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

While the Lusaka process faces some difficulties, it is seeking to implement a draft ceasefire agreement while also taking into account the security concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as those of all its neighbours. All those involved in the conflict have been called upon to realize the futility of seeking durable peace through the barrel of the gun. Lasting peace can be attained only through a political settlement.

The African ceasefire initiative is meant to provide a basis for a political solution to the conflict. It sets out a framework to end the crisis diplomatically. A ceasefire is therefore critical to the process. However, achieving a cessation of hostilities often involves negotiations and compromise. To avoid reigniting a conflict and to build lasting peace will require a considerable degree of reconciliation among the parties to the conflict. It is this process which all of us must encourage and support.

My country firmly believes in the peaceful settlement of disputes. This, however, is possible only with the necessary political will and trust among the parties. The challenge for us today is to encourage dialogue among the parties. Indeed, we are most grateful for the support the Secretary-General and the Council have been rendering in this regard. It is particularly important that the Council extend its solid support to the peace initiative of the subregion. We see the African initiative as presenting a practical framework for dialogue, peace and reconciliation. It can work if the undivided support of the international community continues and can be assured.

Lastly, it is also our belief that it is not too late for the parties to pull back and save the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people from further suffering. Peace is a prerequisite for the realization and enjoyment of the opportunities and potential abundant in our region and continent. Peace and stability are necessary for development and growth. We must all strive to release the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region from the hostilities currently being experienced. This will permit not only the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but our region as well, to focus on the developmental challenges we all face, which, to say the least, are daunting. We owe this to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of the subregion and of Africa, as well as to the international community.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Burundi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ndaruzaniye (Burundi) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me and my delegation to be invited to the Council table to convey my Government's modest contribution to our joint consideration of a peaceful solution to the conflict that is tearing apart the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the outset, I should like to thank and congratulate you, Mr. President. I should like first to thank you and, through you, the entire Security Council, for opening this discussion to delegations that, though not members of the Security Council, are equally dedicated to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Secondly, I should like to commend you, Sir, for the excellent approach you have taken to the subject: discussing a peaceful way of resolving the conflict that is tearing apart the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the entire Great Lakes region.

If all those involved and all those who have spoken share the same determination to find a peaceful way to resolve this conflict, my delegation has no doubt that the bases for a lasting resolution of this conflict will be established in order to block the possibility of further hostilities.

My Government is convinced that only a peaceful approach and dialogue can initiate a lasting solution to any armed or non-armed conflict. We are encouraged by what we have heard: that all the parties are increasingly resolved to adopt such an approach in order to resolve the conflict that concerns all of us taking part in this discussion. I should like to reaffirm that, if requested to do so, the Government of Burundi will make its full contribution and provide assistance to enable that approach to triumph so that peace can be consolidated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the entire Great Lakes region.

For decades, the Great Lakes region of Africa has been subjected to almost chronic instability. Cyclical insecurity has produced refugee flows and a whole series of problems that innocent people have been enduring for generations. The ideology of extermination and genocide, which in Rwanda led to the greatest genocide of the late twentieth century, is, unfortunately, still spreading throughout the region. While the violence of war scares

all of us, verbal violence gives rise to a war mentality and an ideology of violence, against which we should all fight to our last breath.

While earnestly calling for an immediate cessation of armed hostilities and for the opening of dialogue between the parties directly or indirectly concerned in this conflict, it is just as necessary and urgent to initiate throughout the Great Lakes region a genuine culture of peace that will restore the universal values of human rights.

As the President of the Republic of Burundi stated to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, we are concerned about the persistence of a way of thinking that sets people against each other on the basis of ethnicity and about the use in the region of sinister militias and rebels. President Buyoya also drew the attention of all the parties to the conflict to the fact that they should not pursue that path, because of the great risk of conflagration in the region at large.

Unfortunately, in that part of the world entire defeated armies and militias of all types are moving about throughout the region, making short-lived alliances here and there that spread terror and propagate the same ideology of extermination and genocide. Bands of criminals do not hesitate to proclaim themselves heroes of liberation beyond their borders, and funds are set up to fuel these networks of illicit arms traffic, which then foment continual cross-border wars in the region.

The conclusions of the reports in documents S/1998/777 and S/1998/1096 of the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on the movements of arms and of armed groups or genocidal militias in the Great Lakes region are eloquent on the subject, and deserve the close attention of the Security Council so that peace and security can be restored in that part of the world.

The Congolese Minister for Human Rights referred us to document S/1999/205 on human rights violations in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which he submitted to the Security Council. My delegation has taken due note of that document and of the step taken with the Security Council.

Nevertheless, it seems to us that it would have been fairer and more constructive to submit a complete report on human rights violations in his country rather than just adding to the list of external aggressors, because the deep-seated conflict that is raging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is of an internal nature, and its lasting solution depends to a great extent on the Congolese people themselves.

Today's topic should orient us towards an approach of peace, of security for all, of dialogue for peace. Unfortunately, other forces are developing an approach that glorifies crime, and the media, through modern technology, are disseminating an approach of hate. The approach of peace must win out over that of hate and violence. For security to prevail, we necessarily have to stop crime, because the instability of a neighbour not only does not guarantee security for oneself but can also be a persistent source of destabilization in the shared region.

We must create or restore State or inter-State mechanisms in order to achieve the common objective of peace and stability in the region, and here the support of the international community is necessary. The achievement of these goals requires a cooperation that should be dictated not by a state of war but rather by a constant quest for peaceful coexistence among States and peoples.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm the support of the Government of Burundi for regional initiatives as well as those taken by the OAU for a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I should like also to call upon the United Nations and the international community to take additional and complementary steps in areas where regional initiatives will have limitations, especially in material and organizational terms.

While the protagonists are responsible for the outbreak of the conflict, they also hold the key to the solution because they know its root causes better than anyone. Only dialogue at a negotiating table can reduce tensions initially and later lay the foundations for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

New problems stemming from the complexity of war require first and foremost the attention of States and then that of the international community. These problems include the forcible displacement of persons within and outside countries, the unlawful movement of arms throughout the region, distinguishing between combatants and unarmed civilians, the increase in the number of abandoned children, and the proliferation of militias with various and divergent purposes, among others.

Along with dialogue among the protagonists with a view to putting an end to the war and taking the path of a peaceful solution to the conflict, we must give serious consideration to these new phenomena in order to help States establish adequate machinery to deal with these problems. I would like to express support, on behalf of my Government, for the serious consideration that Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Security Council have undertaken to give to the resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Perhaps Africa's traditional talent for settling conflicts and resolving difficulties might help us out in the process of establishing the appropriate modern mechanisms to safeguard peace and security in our countries and throughout the world.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Burundi for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jamaica. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Durrant (Jamaica): Mr. President, let me thank you and the other members of the Security Council for allowing my delegation to participate in this debate on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I wish also to congratulate you, Sir, on your excellent conduct of the business of the Security Council and would wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Canada for his skilful leadership of the Council during the month of February.

Mr. President, Jamaica welcomes your initiative in convening this open meeting of the Security Council on the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo brings into sharper focus the wider issue of the need to promote durable and sustainable peace in Africa. The deep-rooted conflicts which manifest themselves today have perpetuated a culture of violence and war, affecting especially the civilian population. The pervasiveness of ethnic strife, the continuing refugee crisis, and the proliferation of small arms in areas of conflict have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace for its people.

My delegation remains concerned about these developments, and we wish to use this forum to express our commitment to international initiatives geared at ensuring the peaceful settlement of conflicts within the region.

In this respect, we wish to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his continuing efforts in working actively with the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and with all the parties concerned, to bring about a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict.

The current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is indeed alarming, as confirmed by many speakers here today. The conflicts which have erupted in recent months pose a serious threat to security and peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as to the Great Lakes region as a whole. My delegation wholeheartedly believes that in the interest of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the region and Africa, there must be an end to the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To this end, we support the call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and reaffirm our support for the unity, stability and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

Jamaica fully supports the proposal to hold an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU. We further encourage the international community to fully demonstrate its commitment to the region by giving more tangible support to peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives on the continent.

The very difficult question before us is how to mitigate the suffering of the civilian population who have been the victims of war. We call upon all parties involved in the conflict to take the necessary measures to prevent violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by forces under their command, and to refrain from inciting ethnic hatred and from persecuting civilians on the grounds of nationality or ethnicity.

My delegation wishes to emphasize that peaceful solutions must be found to resolve the current crisis so that the process of democratization and reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can proceed.

We believe that a solution to the crisis lies in regional and cooperative efforts among African States. An effective regional approach would promote the resolution of fundamental issues which may lead to a lasting peace. In this regard, we welcome the regional diplomatic initiatives taken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to bring a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are convinced that a peaceful settlement of the dispute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is dependent largely on the political will of the parties involved to bring about a workable solution. It is necessary, therefore, that there be flexibility of positions and a spirit of compromise among the parties. Only then can durable and sustainable peace be realized.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me.

The Minister for Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked to speak. I give him the floor.

Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*interpretation from French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo called for today's debate in a constructive spirit, not out of a desire for polemics. Accordingly, we shall not respond to the unfounded accusations made earlier by our aggressors.

However, I should like to point out that, since 2 August 1998, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been the target of aggression that constitutes a breach of the peace and a serious threat to international security. It was therefore our duty to call on the Security Council, whose primary role is precisely to maintain peace and international security.

Unlike what has been said here today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a peaceful country in which more than 450 ethnic groups live in harmony. Despite the diversity from which it draws its cultural wealth, the Congolese people practices no racist, let alone genocidal culture whatsoever. That is practiced, not to say relished, elsewhere. The origins of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are the export of external conflicts from the aggressor countries and the hegemonic impulses of their leaders. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was resolutely committed to pursuing the process of democratization, which was rudely interrupted by the aggression. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is resolved nevertheless to pursuing the process. The national debate recently announced by President M'zee Laurent-Désiré Kabila is a step in that direction.

Contrarily to the excuses offered by the aggressors, their aggression pre-dates the intervention of the allied forces, implemented at the formal request of a legitimate Government in the context of the legitimate right to self-defence recognized in the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. Regardless, and as we stated earlier, since the aggressors are citing border insecurity as a pretext for their aggression, we would urge the Security Council fully and immediately to shoulder its responsibilities by taking the steps necessary to re-establish the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and security in our region. We would therefore call once again on the Security Council to act appropriately under the provisions of Articles 39 to 42 of the Charter. Should it fail to do so, the aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo would set a dangerous precedent that would trample the sacred principles on which this Organization is founded.

It is our deepest desire to see a speedy end to the war, and with it to the suffering of our people. We would therefore appeal to the Security Council to be sensitive to our pain. Your involvement, Sir, as well as that of the Security Council, are genuinely sought.

The President (*interpretation from Chinese*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.